

The Sixty-second Season of
THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2492d Concert

CUARTETO de CUERDAS de BELLAS ARTES

BALBI COTTER, *violin* VIKTORIA HORTI, *violin*
MATTHEW SCHUBRING, *viola* ADOLFO RAMOS, *cello*

Presented in honor of the exhibitions
Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya and
The Cubist Paintings of Diego Rivera: Memory, Politics, Place

Sunday Evening, 4 April 2004
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

String Quartet in D Minor
K. 421 (1783)

Allegro moderato
Andante
Minuetto: Allegretto
Allegretto ma non troppo

Manuel Enríquez
(1926–1994)

String Quartet No. 1
(1957)

Enérgico
Tranquilo
Festivo

Intermission

Hilario Sánchez de Carpio
(b. 1939)

El cenote sagrado
(1984)

Miklós Rózsa
(1907–1995)

String Quartet
Op. 22 (1950)

Andante con moto
Scherzo in modo ongarese
Lento
Allegro feroce

The Musicians

The **Cuarteto de Cuerdas de Bellas Artes** was founded in 1974 and is currently one of several musical units of the Mexican National Institute of Fine Arts. The quartet members have served as principal players in Mexico's leading orchestras, including the Mexico City Philharmonic, the National University Philharmonic, the Bellas Artes Theatre Orchestra, and the Fine Arts Chamber Orchestra. They have taught at Mexico's prime centers of music education, including the Ollin Yolitzli School, the National University's School of Music, and the "El Nigromante" Cultural Center in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato.

The Cuarteto de Cuerdas de Bellas Artes performs the full range of string quartet repertoire, from Haydn to composers of the present day. Special emphasis is placed on the music of contemporary Mexican composers. The quartet has given world premieres of many works and actively collaborates with the Mexican Society of Authors and Composers, Mexico's International Women's Day, and the Foro Internacional de Música Nueva "Manuel Enríquez," an annual festival dedicated to new music. Other collaborations of note have included the Mexican premiere performances of the tango-inspired opera *Maria de Buenos Aires*, by the Argentinean composer Astor Piazzola.

Program Notes

Mozart expressed profound respect and admiration for the inimitable string quartet writing of his "most dear friend" Joseph Haydn in the dedication of the six quartets known as the "Haydn" quartets. An excerpt from the dedication reads: "Behold here, famous man and dearest friend, my six children...your praise...encourages me...and makes me hope that they shall not be entirely unworthy of your good will." Haydn, for his part, was so impressed with Mozart's quartets that he thereafter insisted that Mozart had taught him how to compose for string quartet, even though by that time Haydn already had forty-two such works to his credit! The *D Minor Quartet* is by far the most tragic of the six, with a piercing sadness that sometimes borders on gloominess. The falling octave in the opening

theme is the first of numerous musical devices traditionally associated with sadness that continually reappear throughout the quartet. The only ray of hope is provided by the trio of the third movement (*Minuetto: Allegro*), which introduces playful spurts in the reverse dotted rhythm of the Schottisch. The final variation of the theme and variations that make up the fourth movement (*Allegro ma non troppo*) is in major mode, but even here the frequent harmonic changes present a troubled picture.

Diego Rivera (1886–1957) was arguably the most important Mexican painter of the twentieth century and certainly one of the most dynamic figures in Mexico's recent history. The exhibition *The Cubist Paintings of Diego Rivera: Memory, Politics, Place*, which opens today at the National Gallery and remains on view until 25 July 2004, emphasizes Rivera's distinctive approach to synthetic cubism and includes works he created between 1913 and 1915, when he was in France and Spain. These extraordinary compositions of vivid colors and tactile surfaces demonstrate the artist's engagement with themes of identity and place during a time of profound social and political upheaval in both Europe and Mexico. The exhibition explores the evocative links developed between objects, people, and places, often including specifically Mexican motifs or references to the cities Rivera inhabited at the time (Paris, Madrid, and Mallorca). Together, these paintings not only represent the artist's finest cubist work, but they also offer important meditations on self-identity and nationalism.

By replacing the words "these paintings" and "cubist" in the previous sentence with the musical terms "this chamber music" and "neoclassical," the statement applies equally well to the string quartet by Manuel Enríquez on this program. Enríquez was born in Ocotlán in the state of Jalisco. He died in Mexico City in 1994. His teachers were his father and the Mexican composers Ignacio Camarena and Miguel Bernal Jiménez. In the course of graduate studies in the United States, Enríquez attended courses taught by Ivan Galamian, Louis Persinger, William Primrose, Peter Mennin, and Stefan Wolpe. He was honored during his lifetime by consecutive appointments as head of Mexico's National Conservatory of Music, National Institute of Fine Arts, and International Forum of New Music, which was named after him upon his death.

Enríquez' first string quartet is neoclassical in style, in that the traditional sonata-allegro form defines its first movement and the rondo form its third movement. The second movement is reminiscent of a nocturne and features expressive solos for the cello and the viola. The most palpable Mexican traits can be found in the third movement (*Festivo*), in which the alternating 5/8 and 6/8 rhythms, displaced accents, and extended pizzicato section suggest music that might accompany a joyous Mexican folk festival.

Hilario Sánchez de Carpio is a native of Bochil, in the southeastern Mexican state of Chiapas. With barely three years of grade school education, he taught himself to read and write music and, at age eighteen, was invited to join the Tropical Octet of France, a jazz ensemble that performed extensive tours in Africa. In the course of that collaboration, he worked with Stephane Grapelli and Bill Coleman, among others. Sánchez de Carpio has composed music for films, dance, and the theater as well as symphonic and chamber music. His works are firmly rooted in his background as a Chiapanecan and his experience as a jazz musician. *El cenote sagrado* (*The Sacred Pool*) is a musical impression of the seemingly bottomless pools of water that can be found in the jungles of Chiapas. *Cenote* is the Mayan word for such pools, to which the Mayans ascribed mystical qualities. In pre-Columbian times, the pools were used in the sacrifice of virgins. Sánchez de Carpio composed this one-movement work in response to a visit to Chincultic in Chiapas, where he was able to observe the famous Cenote of Chincultic from atop a Mayan pyramid. The music is by turns hypnotic and rhythmically obsessive, reflecting the composer's feelings upon encountering a place of mysterious and violent history. An encounter with nearly 200 intriguing artifacts of the Mayan civilization is available to visitors to the Gallery's East Building, where the exhibition *Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya* remains on view until 25 July 2004.

Miklós Rózsa, a native of Hungary, attended the famous Leipzig Conservatory in Germany. The rising tide of fascism and national socialism in central Europe forced him to emigrate to Paris in 1932 and to the United States in 1940. He spent the rest of his career in Los Angeles, where he served as a professor of composition at the University of

California at Los Angeles and composed the scores for numerous Hollywood films. Outstanding examples include *Ben Hur*, *El Cid*, and *Quo vadis*, which owe their monumentality not only to their casts of thousands, but also to the stirring scores Rószá provided. His identity as a film composer was so firmly established in his lifetime that his other works were largely ignored. His *String Quartet, Op. 22*, is an excellent example of his virtually unknown chamber music. It is steeped with Hungarian flavor, especially in its lively second movement. Given the austere nature of most of the string quartets written in the mid-twentieth century, the quartet's unabashed neoromantic sweep is almost an anachronism. Nevertheless, the skill and sincerity of the writing and the extreme virtuosic demands it makes on the performers make this work a classic of the twentieth-century string quartet repertoire.

Program notes by Stephen Ackert
Notes on Enríquez, Sánchez de Carpio, and Rószá
by Matthew Schubring, adapted and edited by Stephen Ackert

*The use of cameras or recording equipment during
the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell
phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.*

*For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*